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**NOTES ON THE EVOLUTION  
OF THE ARTS CURRICULUM  
IN THE UNIVERSITIES OF  
ABERDEEN**

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## NOTES ON THE EVOLUTION OF THE ARTS CURRICULUM IN THE UNIVERSITIES OF ABERDEEN.

149<sup>4</sup>—1560.

Pope Alexander VI.'s Bull of Erection (10th February, 149<sup>4</sup>) prescribes, for the course of study, only that it shall be "sicut in Parisiensi et Bononiensi et quibusvis aliis generalibus studiis ad hoc privilegiatis".\* So also in Bishop Elphinstone's Foundation, within the University, of the College of St. Mary (7th September, 1505—afterwards King's College), we read simply: "Regentes in artibus instruant et informent suos scolares in scientiis liberalibus prout regentes artium in alma Universitate Parisiensi suos ibidem instruunt scolares et informant".† And the Instrument of Confirmation by Bishop Dunbar (14th June, 1531) is not more explicit.‡

The only extant pre-Reformation MS. dealing with the usages of the University and College is the Record of a Rectorial Visitation in 1549 §; but this, while containing many details of interest relative to the social life of the students, gives little information as to the nature of the curriculum. The Academical Year began on the Calends of October, and the Curriculum seems to have been spread (with no vacations, either for teachers or taught) over three and a half years: the Graduation being held in April.

It so happens, however, that certain statutes have been preserved of the Faculty of Arts in the University of Glasgow (where Bishop Elphinstone had studied and graduated), promulgated seemingly about the time of the foundation of the University of Aberdeen. These statutes show how largely the curriculum was confined to the study of the works of Aristotle. All was given in Latin, Greek not having been yet introduced.

"Statuimus et ordinamus quaedam volumina ordinaria, et quaedam extraordianaria, in quibus promovendi [ad gradus] habent informari et examinari.

\* *Fasti Aberdonenses*, p. 4.

† *Ibid.*, p. 58.

‡ *Ibid.*, p. 80.

§ *Ibid.*, p. 259.

“ Ordinaria vero audienda sunt haec. Primo scilicet, in veteri arte, liber Universalium Porphyrii, liber Praedicatorum Aristotelis, duo libri Peri Hermenias ejusdem. In nova logica, duo libri priorum [Analyticorum], duo posteriorum, quatuor ad minus Topicorum, scilicet primus, secundus, sextus et octavus, et duo Elenchorum. In Philosophia, octo libri Phisicorum, tres de caelo et mundo, duo de generatione et corruptione, tres libri de Anima, etiam de sensu et sensato, de memoria et reminiscencia, de somno et vigilia, et septem libri Metaphysicae.

“ Audiantur libri extraordinarii in toto vel in parte, ubi facultas mature dispensabit, si fiat defectus: scilicet in logica, textus Petri Hispani, cum synecathegorematisbus; tractatus de distributionibus, liber G. Po[rretani], sex principiorum. In Philosophia, tres libri meteorologicorum, tractatus de sphaera sine dispensatione; sex libri ethicorum, si legantur; perspectiva; algorismus; et principia geometriae, si legantur.”\*

### 1560—1700.

The establishment in Scotland of a Reformed Church was quickly followed by the remodelling of the three Papal Universities, in accordance with the views of George Buchanan and Andrew Melville. The Greek language was added to the curriculum; the Catholic regents were ousted, and their successors were to be confined each to one department, and not as hitherto each to take his students through the four years of their course. The “Nova Fundatio” of King’s College (*circa* 1580) is precise in assigning their respective duties to the four.

“ Primae et infimae classi praefectus Graecae linguae institutionem profitebitur, addita enarratione quam facillimorum et optimorum authorum utriusque linguae, eosdemque frequenti styli exercitio. . . . Proximus praeepta inventionis, dispositionis, et elocutionis quam possit facili methodo suos auditores docebit, usumque praceptorum ex optimis utriusque linguae authoribus praeeptis adjunget, adolescentesque tum scribendo tum declamando exercebit, ut in utriusque linguae facultate pares ad Philosophiae praeepta capessenda magis idonei evadere possint. . . . Tertius Arithmeticae et Geometriae rudimenta, selectionem ex Aristotelis organo logico unacum ejusdem libris ethicis et politicis e Graeco contextu enarrabit, quibus et librorum Marci Tullii de Officiis ad mores melius reformatos et linguam Latinam locupletandam explicationem adjunget. . . . Quartus, quem subprincipalem nominamus . . . Physiologiam omnem eamque quae de natura animalium utpote imprimis necessariam de Graeco Aristotelis contextu enarrabit, Geographiam et Astrologiam profitebitur, necnon generalem etiam Cosmographiam et temporum a condito mundo suppurationem, quae res ad alias disciplinas et Historiarum cognitionem non

\* *Munimenta Universit. Glasguen.*, ii. 25.

parum lucis ad fert, quibus sub anni finem sanctae linguae praecpta una cum earundem nonnulla praxi adjunget."\*

The Charter of the Protestant College and University, founded in 1593 by George, fifth Earl of Marischal, prescribes the duties of the three regents and principal (there was no sub-principal, and no fourth regent till 1620) in words almost identical with the above.† Down to 1641, the teachers of the bajan, semi, tertian, and magistrand classes are styled Professors of Greek, Logic, Moral Philosophy, and Natural Philosophy, respectively.‡ Instruction was carried on for practically the whole year, the vacation which had insidiously crept in at King's College being explicitly forbidden. "Volumus," says the Earl, "ne intermissione studiorum et moribus et literis damnum afferatur, omnes consuetas a studiis vacationes penitus aboleri."

An interesting glimpse of the daily routine at King's College about the year 1600 is given by David Camerarius § :—

"Hora sexta omnes scholas praemisso campanae signo ingrediuntur, in eisque lectionibus suis usque ad octavam operam navant. Tum vero signo dato omnes in templum Deum oratūrū conveniunt; et ne quisquam desit, eorum omnium nomina a censore citantur: cui ipsorum nomen inclamanti nisi respondeant *adsum ut absentes notantur postea puniendi*. Oratione finita usque ad nonam in scholas suas redeunt; qua data, jentatum dimittuntur usque ad decimam; tum vero signo campanae in scholas rursum revocantur usque ad undecimam, qua elapsa omnes cum suis magistris in scholam seu communem dictam, in qua cuique scholae suus locus est rite assignatus. Ibi disputando inter se ad duodecimam tempus terunt, . . . data duodecima domum quisque prandii causa (nisi sint in ipso Collegio convictores vel bursarii, quibus Collegio sine venia exire non licet) petit; neque in scholas ante secundam usque redeunt. A secunda usque ad sesquicentam in suis quique manent scholis. Deinde praemisso campanae signo omnes cum professoribus in Collegii templum Deum oratūrū conveniunt. Ante orationem omnium nominibus ut mane a censore citatis. Finita oratione coenatum domum revertuntur. Octava deinde hora rursus monentur philosophi, ut se in Collegium conferant: hora nona cubitum ituri."

The earliest extant Minute Book of King's College begins with the year 1634. Its contents prove that in the year 1641 the old system of continuous instruction of each class under a single regent was reintroduced.

In 1647-48, there was held at Edinburgh a conference of representatives appointed by the Universities of St. Andrews, Glasgow, Aberdeen and Edinburgh. A copy of their minutes,

\* *Off. and Grad. of King's Coll.*, pp. 339-40.

† *Fasti Academiae Mariscallanae*, p. 43.      ‡ *Ibid.*, p. 65.

§ *De Scotorum Fortitudine*, pp. 57-8.

preserved in King's College Archives,\* furnishes some interesting details.

"Courses taught yeirly in the King's College of Aberdine :—  
The Colledge sitteth downe in the beginning of October, and  
for the space of a moneth till the studentis be weill convened,  
both masters and schollaris are exercised with repetitiones and  
examinationis, quich being done, the courses are begun about  
the first or second day of November.

"1. To the first classe is taught Clenard Antesignanus ; the  
greatest part of the New Testament ; Basilius Magnus his  
epistole ; ane oration of Isocrates ; ane other of Demosthenes ;  
a buik of Homer ; Phocyllides : some of Nonni paraphrasis.

"2. To the second classe, Rami dialectica ; Vossii retorica ;  
some elements of arithmetick ; Porphyrie ; Aristotill his cate-  
gories, de interpretatione and prior analyticks, both text and  
questiones.

"3. To the third classe, the rest of the logicks ; twa first  
books of the ethicks ; five chapteris of the third, with a  
compend of the particular writtiis ; the first fyve books of the  
generall phisicks, with some elements of geometrie.

"4. To the fourt classe, the booke de caelo, de ortu et  
interitu, de anima, the meteoris ; sphera Jo. de Sacro bosco,  
with some beginningis of geography and insight in the globs  
and mappes.

"This is to be understood, ordinarily, and in peaceable  
tymes."

"Courses taught yeirly in Marishall Colledge at Aberdine :—

"1. Vnto these of the first classe is taught Clenardus Ante-  
signanus his grammar ; for orations, twa of Demosthenes, ane  
of Isocrates ; for poets, Phocyllides and some portione of  
Homer ; with the haill new testament.

"2. Vnto the second classe a breiff compend of the Logickis,  
the text of Porphrie and Aristotellis organon accurately explained,  
the haill questiones ordinarily disputed to the end of the de-  
monstrationes.

"3. To the thrid the first twa bookis of Ethickis, and the first  
fyve chapteris of the thrid, text and questiones, the first fyve  
bookes of acroamaticks, questiones de compositione continuu,  
and some of the eight bookis.

"4. To the fourt the bookis de caelo, de generatione, the  
meteoris, de anima, Joannes a Sacro bosco on the spheare, with  
some geometry."

The curriculum at King's College, at about the same  
period, is more fully set forth in the *Leges Veteres* of the  
College.†

"Porro ut intelligent studiosi, quid a praceptoribus suis  
expectare possint ac debeant, subsequentem cursus philosophici  
formulam senatus academici autoritate praescriptam et sanctitam  
sedulo attendant et observent.

\* Munitment Room, King's Coll., MS., O.C. xxiii., 6 (2).

† *Fasti Aberd.*, p. 230.

“ Studiosis primi ordinis a suo praeceptore praelegantur sequentia; Clenardi grammatica Graeca integra cum scholiis Antesignani et selectioribus quibusdam eclogis e Syntaxi Sylburgii et Hellenismis Caninii cum praxi analyseos perpetua ex N. T. Item epistola Basillii magni ad Gregorium Nazianzen. Isocratis Orationes duae ad Demonicum et Evagoram; Demosthenis Philippica 2<sup>a</sup>, Phocylidis Poema *συνθετικον*, Hesiodi Operum et dierum lib. 1, Iliad. Homeri lib. 1, Theocriti Idyllia 3, 4, Nonni Paraphraseos cap. 1: Praeterea Linguae S. Hebreac elementa, ex Epitome Buxtorfiana, una cum praxi analyseos 5 capitum Catecheseos. Diebus autem Dominicis eadem Catecheseos capita Hebraeo-Graeco-Latina tyronibus praelegantur, et facili, brevi, ac perspicua enarratione ad eorum capita ac commodata iisdem inculcentur.

“ Studiosis secundi ordinis praelegantur Rami dialectica, Talei aut Vossii Rhetorica, Alstedii compendium Arithmeticæ et Geometricæ ex ejusdem admirandis Mathematicis, Porphyrii Isagoge, ex Aristotelis Organo lib. Categor., lib. de Interpretatione, libri duo priores analyticæ, Topicœ libri 1 et 8, cum caeterorum epitome, et lib. de Sophist. Eleñchis. Diebus autem dominicis pars 1<sup>a</sup> Catecheseos Palatinæ, quæ est de Hominis miseria, cum explicationibus Ursino-Paræanis.

“ Studiosis tertii ordinis praelegantur libri duo posteriores Analyticæ, Ethicœ Nicomacheœ duo libri priores, cum prima parte libri tertii de principiis humanarum actionum, et compendio accurato doctrinæ de virtutib[us] in specie. Item synopsis justa doctrinæ Oeconomiae et Politicæ ex Keckermanno, Alstedio, aut alio ejusmodi methodico scriptore. Denique Acroaseos physicae libri 5 priores adjungantur. Diebus autem Dominicis praelegantur tertianis pars secunda Catecheseos Palatinæ, de Liberatione hominis a miseria, cum explicationibus Ursino-Paræanis.

“ Studiosis quarti ordinis praelegantur libri de Caelo 1, 2 et 4, libri duo de Ortu et Interitu, synopsis doctrinæ Meteorologicae, proemium lib. de Anima, et secundus ac tertius libri de Anima integri, cum Epitome parvorum naturalium quæ vocant. Quibus addentur vel opportune inserantur Elementa Astronomiae Sphericae et Theoricae, Geographiae, Opticæ, et Musicae, ex Alstedii admirandis Mathematicis, necnon Metaphysicæ ex Keckermanno, &c. Diebus autem Dominicis pars tertia Catecheseos Palatinæ, de Gratitudine, cum explanationibus Ursino-Paræanis enarretur.”

So, for Marischal College, we find like details in the *Leges Novæ Acad. Aberd.*\* It will be observed that the academical year ended about 31st July.

“ Prima classis praecepta graecæ grammaticæ ex Clenardo, eorundem praxin ex Isocrate, Demosthene, Platone, et aliis addiscito; cum graecis latina ex Cicerone, Salustio, et aliis coniungito; in vtriusque linguae Genesi subinde exercitor; sub Cal. Februarias publicum specimen latinae geneseos de-

\* MS. in Muniment Room, Mar. Coll.

clamando exhibeto. Eodem mense et Martio Rheticam ex Talaeo addiscito, et a Calend. Aprilis in Calend. Augusti in Dialecticis quae ex Ramo addiscet exercitor. Cum his perpetuo et paelectio graeca coniungatur.

“Secunda classis sub redditum examini se subjcito. Geographiam deinde et Aristotelis libellum de mundo addiscito, et in Graecis et Latinis ad Cal. vsque Februarias exercitor. Inde in Calend. Augusti in Aristotelis organo logico versator.

“Tertiani ingressi examini se denuo subjciant, et vbi probarent diligentiam in graecis latinis Rheticis et Dialectica, primo honoris gradu quem Baccalaureatum vocant ornentur; ornati hoc honore si quid in logicis adhuc superest addiscant; et ad Ethicam progrediantur quam ex Aristotele et Ciceronis officiis haurient. Eodem anno acroamaticos Aristotelis libros paeceptor proponito.

“Quartani ingressi ante Calend. Februarij Physicam Aristotelis absolvant, cum quo Plinij et quaestionum Fregij paelectionem coniungent. A Cal. Februarij ad Calend. Maij Arithmetiken et Geometriam addiscant. Inde ad Calend. Augusti doctrinam sphaericam, seu Astronomiae rudimenta et Grammaticen hebraeam; in quibus studiis si diligentiam probarent, Doctoris philosophiae et artium insignii ornantur.”

In 1690, a General Commission of Visitation was appointed by the Scots Parliament,\* this being the first serious attempt by the State to interfere with the autonomy of the individual Universities. The Commission sat for ten years and issued many Ordinances, introducing valuable changes; but its professedly most important aim, the production of a uniform Course to be taught in all the Scottish Universities, was left in 1700 as far as ever from being accomplished. An injunction to assign to one of the Regents the special duty and designation of Professor of Greek was obeyed by King's College in 1700; by Marischal College, not until 1717.

Among the voluminous correspondence of the Commission † is preserved a “constitutione of the Marischall Colledge as to their methode of instructing and educating Youth”. From this we learn that:—

The first class “are instructed in Philologie, Hebrew, Greek and Latine, and the principles of Arithmetick; and when they have made some progress in those languages, towards the middle of the year they declaime and make publick orationes befor the masters and students upon some commendable subject both in Greek and Latine”.

The second class “are instructed in Logick and the methods of reasoning, both conforme to the principles of old and new Philosophie, their severall pensees and taskes are explained each morning by the master of this class and are examined each night, and in the forenoone ther ar constant repetitions of what

\* 2nd W. and M., cap. 25: *Scots Acts*, ix. 163.

† In H.M. General Register House, Edinburgh.

hath been formerly taught and examined. When they are for some part of this year advanced in their Logick they doe then dispute publickly and doe emitt theses, and the dispute is moderat by one of the professors. . . . They are likeways instructed in the principles of Geometrie, and have their publick declamations each week for that year and in the close of the week are examined of ane sacred lessone, and upon Sabath dayes after sermon do give ane account of God's Word preached unto them."

The third class "are instructed in the Generall Phisiologie and principles of Naturall Philosophie conform to the old and new Philosophie. Ther is taught to them ane idea of all the Hypotheses both ancient and modern. . . . After the periode and close of the philosophick course they are by their respective masters informed in the principles of Morality and Aethicks."

The fourth class "are instructed in the Knowledge of Metaphysics and Speciall Phisiologie, are informed how to explain all the particular phenomena of nature . . . are instructed in the principles of Astronomie . . . undergoe ane tryall and examen of their proficiency in all the four years' courses befor the Principall and Masters, and thereafter doe emitt publick theses, which they defend in ane solemne maner in presence of all the Doctors, Professors, and learned men of the University. And thereafter, after they have solemnly bound themselves by oath to the Protestant Religion, and to be gratefull to their Alma Mater, they doe conforme to their severall qualifications receive the degree of Master of Arts."

When the time for graduation approached, the Regent drew up a Thesis, embodying the substance of selected parts of his course. This (after 1622, when the first printing press was set up in Aberdeen) was printed at the expense of the Candidates, who on the day of trial publicly "propugned" and defended portions of the Thesis. The Theses, of which a considerable number have been preserved in the University Library, in the British Museum, and in the Bodleian, are very interesting as showing the extent of the teaching and preserving the names of the candidates. They vary much in length, some running to a hundred pages of close type; and in topics, including Theses Logicae, Morales, Physicae, Astronomicae, etc. The latest extant specimen is that of the 1732 graduation of Marischal College. The dates of graduation, as given in the Theses, illustrate the gradual shrinking of the Academical year: e.g., 22nd July, 1622; 24th June, 1659; 23rd May, 1689; 2nd May, 1705; 25th April, 1710; 13th April, 1732.\*

#### 1700—1825.

In Marischal College the curriculum of 1700 seems to have been followed without much alteration down to 1753.

\* P. J. Anderson's *Bibliography of the Universities*, pp. 6, 21, 28, 34, 35, 40.

In that year two important changes were sanctioned, mainly through the exertions of Professor Alexander Gerard (author of the "Essay on Taste": Regent, 1752-1760), by a Minute of Senatus of date 11th January.

"The Principal and Masters of the Marischal College of Aberdeen, being, after the maturest consideration, all fully persuaded that the present order in teaching Philosophy, introduced by the scholastics, is, since the reformation of Philosophy, very improper . . . do therefore unanimously agree and resolve, That for the future (the first year of the academical course being spent as usual under the Professor of Greek, and the meetings on Sabbath evenings in all the classes as formerly, in discourses on such subjects of Natural and Revealed Religion as the Professors shall judge most useful and adapted to the capacities of their Students), the following general order in teaching Philosophy shall be observed in this University, viz., That the semi year, or second of the course, shall be spent in the most useful parts of Natural History, in Geography, and the elements of Civil History; That the tertian, or third of the course, shall be employed in the Scientific parts of Natural Philosophy, Mechanics, Hydrostatics, Pneumatics, Optics, Astronomy, and such other branches not reducible to any of these, as either are in some measure invented already, or may be invented and improved hereafter, as Magnetism, Electricity, &c.: And that the magistrand, or last year, shall be taken up in the Abstract Sciences, or the Philosophy of Spirits, Pneumatology, Ethics, and Logie; leaving it to the several Professors to follow that order and method in teaching each of the general branches, which they shall find from experience to be most useful and convenient.

"And being likewise persuaded, both from the consideration of the thing itself, and the almost universal practice of other Universities, that it will be of great advantage both to the Masters and the Students, that each Professor should be fixed to a particular branch of Philosophy,—They further unanimously agree, That Mr. Francis Skene shall constantly teach the Semi Class, Mr. William Duncan the Tertian, and Mr. Alexander Gerard the Magistrand; . . . And they resolve to do their endeavours that the successors in office to each of these respectively shall, by their patents, be confirmed in that particular branch in which their predecessors were fixed, whether Natural and Civil History, Natural Philosophy, or Moral and Rational Philosophy. And as the above order of teaching requires that the Students should understand the Elements of Mathematics, before they enter the Tertian Class, they further appoint, that all these students should attend the Professor of Mathematics during their semi year" (*Minutes of 11th January, 1753*).

The King's College Professors, while adopting the altered sequence of subjects, adhered to the old system of circulating Regents. This, it is understood, was due to the authority of Dr. Thomas Reid (author of "Inquiry into the



Human Mind," &c.; Regent at King's Coll. 1751-1764), who gave it a decided preference. It is interesting to have before us the grounds on which so enlightened a teacher defended a practice that once so extensively prevailed.

"The Masters having taken under their deliberate consideration, whether it is more fit that the Students of Philosophy should, through all the three years of their Philosophy Course, be under the care of the same Professor, which has been the practice in this University hitherto, or if the three Professors of Philosophy should confine themselves each to a distinct branch of Philosophy, and the Students pass a Session under each of them successively, as is the custom in some other Universities; agreed to continue their ancient practice, which, though more laborious to the Professors, seems to them more beneficial to the Students; because every Professor of Philosophy in this University is also tutor to those who study under him; has the whole direction of their studies, the training of their minds, and the oversight of their manners; and it seems to be generally agreed that it must be detrimental to a Student to change his tutor every Session. It may be reasonably supposed that a Professor, in three years, may acquire an acquaintance with the temper and genius of his pupils, and an authority over them, which may be of great use to them, and yet is not to be expected in the course of one Session. He must be better able to judge of the progress they have made in their studies during the Vacation, and to examine them upon what they have been taught in former Sessions, or make a recapitulation thereof where it is necessary; and though it may be allowed that a Professor who has only one branch of Philosophy for his province may have more leisure to make improvements in it for the benefit of the learned world, yet it does not seem at all extravagant to suppose that a Professor ought to be sufficiently qualified to teach all that his pupils can learn in Philosophy in the course of three Sessions." (*Minutes of 17th August, 1753.*)

It was not until 1800, that at King's College the functions and titles of Professors of Mathematics, of Natural Philosophy, and of Moral Philosophy, were respectively allotted to the three Regents.

During the century and a quarter from 1700 to 1825, the Scottish Universities had been visited by no General Commission of Inquiry; and many grave abuses had crept into their administration. At both the Aberdeen Colleges degrees had come to be conferred in an exceedingly loose manner. At King's College the examination for Masters of Arts had degenerated into a mere form.

"It is the practice for a great number of young men, upon finishing College, to take the Degree of Master of Arts. In order to this, they have to undergo a particular examination

by the Professor of Natural Philosophy, or of the third class ; but none of the rest of the Professors attend upon the occasion, or have ever been in the practice of doing so. The examination, which is not long, and not difficult, relates to Mathematics and Natural Philosophy, but does not comprehend Classical Literature or Moral Philosophy ; and although intricate questions are sometimes put, there is no instance of any one being rejected or prevented from taking the Degree in consequence of this examination ; so that, as instances must occur of inability to answer such questions, it would appear that this inability is overlooked, and that, in point of fact, any person may be graduated. No Report is made by the examining Professor to the Senatus Academicus.” \*

“The regular Course of Study at said College comprises a period of four sessions, during which the following order of attendance is prescribed to all Bursars : During Session 1st—Attendance is required on the First Greek and First Humanity Classes ; Session 2nd—On the Mathematical, Chemistry and Natural History, Second Greek, and Second Humanity Classes ; Session 3rd—On the Natural Philosophy, Second Greek, and Second Humanity Classes ; Session 4th—On the Logic and Moral Philosophy, Second Greek, and Second Humanity Classes.” †

At Marischal College the degree examinations had become equally farcical.

“They consisted of a series of Latin questions in Logic and Rhetoric, introduced by Dr. Beattie [Professor of Moral Philosophy, 1760-1803], about 1765 or later, when public laureations were discontinued. The same set answered for all years ; the Professor of Moral Philosophy dictating copies of both questions and answers to the Candidates, hearing them recite by rote the answers, and then hearing them a second time recite the same in presence of the Faculty. This plan, by which no one could possibly be rejected, continued till 1825. . . . The innovation of Dr. Beattie was, doubtless, partly sanctioned by the still older custom of giving assistance to the graduands in their themes and declamations ; but it had long ere 1825 become a great nuisance and disgrace. And, as if to sanction such a fraud on the College and the public, the words of the diploma remained unaltered, ‘ingenii sui ac eruditio[n]is luculento specimine edito,’ which became an obvious untruth.” ‡

The qualifications in regard to attendance and Course of Study had been, since 1781 :—

“Regular attendance for four years in the Classes of Greek, Civil and Natural History, Natural Philosophy, Moral Philosophy and Logic, and First and Second Mathematical Classes.

\* *Report of 1826 Commissioners*, p. 329. See also *Evidence*, iv., p. 37.

† *Evidence*, iv., p. 214.

‡ Professor Knight’s MS. *Collections* in Univ. Libr., iv., p. 1526.

. . . By order of 27th March, 1818, the Second Greek and the Humanity Class were added to these.” \*

1826—1860.

The immediate cause of the Royal Commission of Visitation of 1826 seems to have been a petition to the Crown by the Senatus of the University of Edinburgh arising from a dispute with their patrons, the Town Council. The occasion, however, was taken of visiting not Edinburgh only, but all the Universities. The Commissioners sat, intermittently, for four years. Their *Report* fills a large folio volume of 436 pp.; the *Minutes* of Evidence and *Returns* from the Universities fill four folio volumes of 2,400 pp. in all: the whole forming a mine of information regarding the constitution and history of the Scottish Universities.

The *Report* embodied an elaborate scheme for a uniform curriculum in Arts (p. 25), leading up to the Degrees of B.A. and M.A. (p. 39); and provided, *inter alia*, for the union of the Universities and Colleges of Aberdeen (p. 22). The Commissioners urged the carrying out of their recommendations by legislative enactment (p. 14); but the great national reforms that occupied the attention of Parliament during the decade 1825-35 interfered with the realisation of their wishes; and ere long it was found necessary to appoint new Commissions of Visitation. One sat at St. Andrews in 1840; one at Glasgow in 1837; and one at Aberdeen in 1837. The *First* and *Second Reports* of the last did not result in an Act of Parliament, but the *Returns* accompanying them show how far the recommendations of the previous Commission had been given effect to within the Universities themselves.

In King's College:—

“There has been no alteration since the date of the returns to the Commission issued in 1826 of the manner in which the classes are taught by the professors, either in relation to lecturing or to examination.

“In regard to the qualifications required of candidates for degrees . . . alterations have taken place within the said period.

“Viewing the degree of A.M. as a general certificate of the student's regular attendance, and suitable proficiency, and as a preliminary step to the attainment of those higher degrees which the University has the right to confer, students, in order to attain it, shall perform the exercises prescribed by the different professors in the curriculum; and, at the annual examinations, at the close of the sessions, shall have returned

\* *Evidence*, iv., p. 293.

satisfactory answers to the number of questions declared in the different classes to constitute the minimum rate of merit, *viz.*, One-third of the questions prescribed.

"At the termination of the curriculum, those students, who in the several classes reached the minimum standard, shall be entitled to the diploma of A.M. Those, who in the majority of the classes have exceeded the minimum, shall receive their diploma, having an additional clause expressive of higher exertion and attainment; while those who have distinguished themselves in all the classes, by good conduct and attainments, shall receive their diploma with the highest distinction which the University can confer.

"Minimum for Graduation in the different Classes.

"Latin : Horace—Odes, two books : Virgil—Eneid, two first books : Cicero—Tusculan questions, 1st book.

"Greek : Xenophon—Anabasis, 1st book : New Testament—two Gospels : Homer—two books.

"Mathematics : Mathematics—Euclid, first six books : plain Trigonometry : in Algebra, simple and quadratic Equations.

"Chemistry : Leading doctrines of Chemistry and Geology, as taught in the class.

"Natural Philosophy : Leading doctrines of Natural Philosophy, as taught in the class, or Playfair's Outlines.

"Moral Philosophy : Leading doctrines of Moral Philosophy, as taught in the class, or Stewart's Outlines."\*

In Marischal College the Arts Curriculum comprises :—

"First year : Greek, fifteen hours a week ; Latin, six hours.

"Second year : Greek, three hours ; Latin, three hours ; Civil and Natural History, fifteen hours ; Mathematics, six hours.

"Third year : Mathematics, six hours ; Natural Philosophy, fifteen hours.

"Fourth year : Moral Philosophy and Logic, fifteen hours.

"Practical Religion, once a week for nineteen weeks, during all the years.

"The Third Greek Class, three hours a week, and the Second Latin Class, three hours a week, are open to Students of the third and fourth years.

"The Third Mathematical Class, five hours a week for nineteen weeks, is open to Students of the fourth year."

"The Candidates are subjected to examinations on the above branches, which examinations are carried on in presence of the Senatus and of the Candidates, on six successive days, and in the following order of subjects, *viz.*, Latin, Greek, Civil and Natural History, Natural Philosophy, Moral Philosophy and

\* *Second Report of 1887 Commissioners*, pp. 106-7.

Logic, and Mathematics. One day is devoted to each subject ; the Professors and the Lecturer on Humanity examine each on his own subject, and the Principal may put questions if he see fit."

"The names of the Candidates who excel in all the subjects of examination are arranged in the order of merit, and the Degree is conferred on these Candidates with Honourable Distinction." \*

The curricula and methods of examination detailed in these extracts remained substantially unchanged down to the date of the reforms introduced by the Scottish Universities Commissioners appointed under the Act of 1858 (see Returns made to the Aberdeen Universities Commissioners of 1857, *Report*, pp. 122, 144. The average age of the King's College entrant is stated to be in 1857 seventeen years nine months ; of the Marischal College entrant sixteen years eight months).†

#### 1860-1889.

The Universities Commissioners of 1858 having, by an Ordinance of date 10th January, 1860, provided that "from and after the 15th day of September in the present year the 'University and King's College of Aberdeen' and the 'Marischal College and University of Aberdeen' shall be united and incorporated into one University and College under the style of the 'University of Aberdeen'" ; proceeded by another Ordinance of date 2nd July, 1860, to arrange a course of study for the degree of M.A. within the said University, as follows :—

1st Session : Greek, Latin, each two hours daily ; English, three hours weekly.

2nd Session : Mathematics, two hours daily ; Greek, Latin, each one hour daily ; Natural History, one hour daily.

3rd Session : Natural Philosophy, eight hours weekly ; Logic, eight hours weekly ; Mathematics, one hour daily.

4th Session : Moral Philosophy, eight hours weekly ; Chemistry, one hour daily ; Natural Philosophy, one hour daily.

The scheme, it will be seen, provided for the retention of both Chemistry and Natural History, which had been characteristic of the King's College and the Marischal

\* *Second Report* of 1887 Commissioners, pp. 199-200.

† The average ages in 1827 were fourteen and twelve respectively (*Report* of 1826 Commission, pp. 327, 357). The average age of the entrants of 1868 was eighteen years one month, the youngest being thirteen years ten months, the oldest twenty-nine years two months. The average age at the present time is about nineteen.

College curricula respectively. It, however, regulated the class attendance at Aberdeen for one Session only.

The Commissioners, having had represented to them the propriety of rendering uniform the course of study in all the Universities of Scotland (*cf.* Act of 1858, § 15 (5)), issued two amending Ordinances (26th January and 10th June, 1861), under which the above Aberdeen Curriculum was repealed, and the necessary course of study for the degree of M.A. was restricted to the following :—

Attendance for two Sessions on Classes of Greek, Humanity, Mathematics, and for one Session on Classes of Logic, Moral Philosophy, Natural Philosophy, English : provided always—

(1) That a student passing a satisfactory examination in Greek, or Latin, or Mathematics, could at once enter the Senior Class in such subject, thus reducing (should he pass in both Greek and Latin) his curriculum to three Sessions.

(2) That after the required class attendance, a student passing examinations in the three departments of (a) Greek and Latin, (b) Logic, Moral Philosophy, and English, (c) Mathematics and Natural Philosophy, should receive the Degree of M.A. without Honours ; or, after passing the three departmental examinations, and before taking his degree, might present himself at a further Examination for Honours in one or more of four departments : (a) Classical Literature, (b) Mental Philosophy, (c) Mathematics, (d) Natural Science. [By Order of the Queen in Council, 4th June, 1870, a Candidate for Honours in any Department was no longer compelled previously to pass without Honours in such Department.]

(3) That the University Court of each University could, should it think fit, require in addition to the above specified classes, “attendance on the lectures of one of the Professors whose branches are included in the Department of Honours in Natural Science” (Chemistry, Botany, Zoology, and Geology).

This last provision was introduced “in consequence in great measure of representations addressed to us by gentlemen connected with the University of Aberdeen”.<sup>\*</sup> It is to the credit of our University that, while the Courts of Edinburgh and of Glasgow appear to have taken no action, the Aberdeen Court decided by a majority, 5th November, 1861, “that all candidates for Graduation in Arts shall . . . give attendance on the Lectures of the Professor of Natural History, and shall be examined in that branch of Natural Science”. Principal Campbell dissented from this

<sup>\*</sup> Report of 1858 Commissioners, p. xxvii.

resolution, and maintained, in five "Reasons," the propriety of allowing all students the privilege of selecting any one of the four branches. The St. Andrews Court, on 13th October, 1869, introduced Chemistry into the M.A. Curriculum, but this regulation was rescinded by a subsequent resolution of 26th March, 1878.

As the outcome of a cry for University Reform, arising mainly within the General Councils, another Royal Commission of Visitation was appointed in 1876, which presented a *Report* in four volumes in 1878. Bills for the better administration of the Universities, based on this Report, were introduced into Parliament in 1883, 1884, 1885, 1887, 1888, and 1889 ; but not until the last year did these lead to any actual legislation on the subject.

#### 1889-1907.

By the Act of 1889 the constitution of the Scottish Universities was to a large extent remodelled, and through the Ordinances framed by the Commission appointed under that Act (the fourth General Commission of the century) the curricula were altered so as to be hardly recognisable by a student of 1860 or 1880.

By the Commissioners' Ordinance, No. 11, approved by Her Majesty in Council on 28th June, 1892, the old Arts Curriculum was swept away, and new regulations of great length and complexity were introduced. Among the more striking novelties are the following :—

(1) Summer Sessions are instituted.  
 (2) The M.A. course extends over three Winter Sessions, or two Winter and three Summer Sessions.

(3) Before entering on this course every student must pass a Preliminary Examination, under the control of a Joint Board of Examiners for the four Scottish Universities.

(4) For the Ordinary Degree, candidates must attend classes in, and be examined on, seven subjects :—

- (a) English or a Modern Language, or History.
- (b) Latin or Greek.
- (c) Logic or Moral Philosophy.
- (d) Mathematics or Natural Philosophy.
- (e) One of the three subjects not already taken under (b), (c), (d) ; or Chemistry.
- (f) and (g) Two subjects from a list of twenty-seven (including the twelve already mentioned) arranged in four Departments—

Language and Literature, 10 : English, Latin, Greek, French, German, Italian, Sanscrit, Hebrew, Arabic or Syriac, Celtic.

Mental Philosophy, 5 : Logic and Metaphysics, Moral Philosophy, Political Economy, Education, Philosophy of Law.

Science, 7 : Mathematics, Natural Philosophy, Astronomy, Chemistry, Zoology, Botany, Geology.

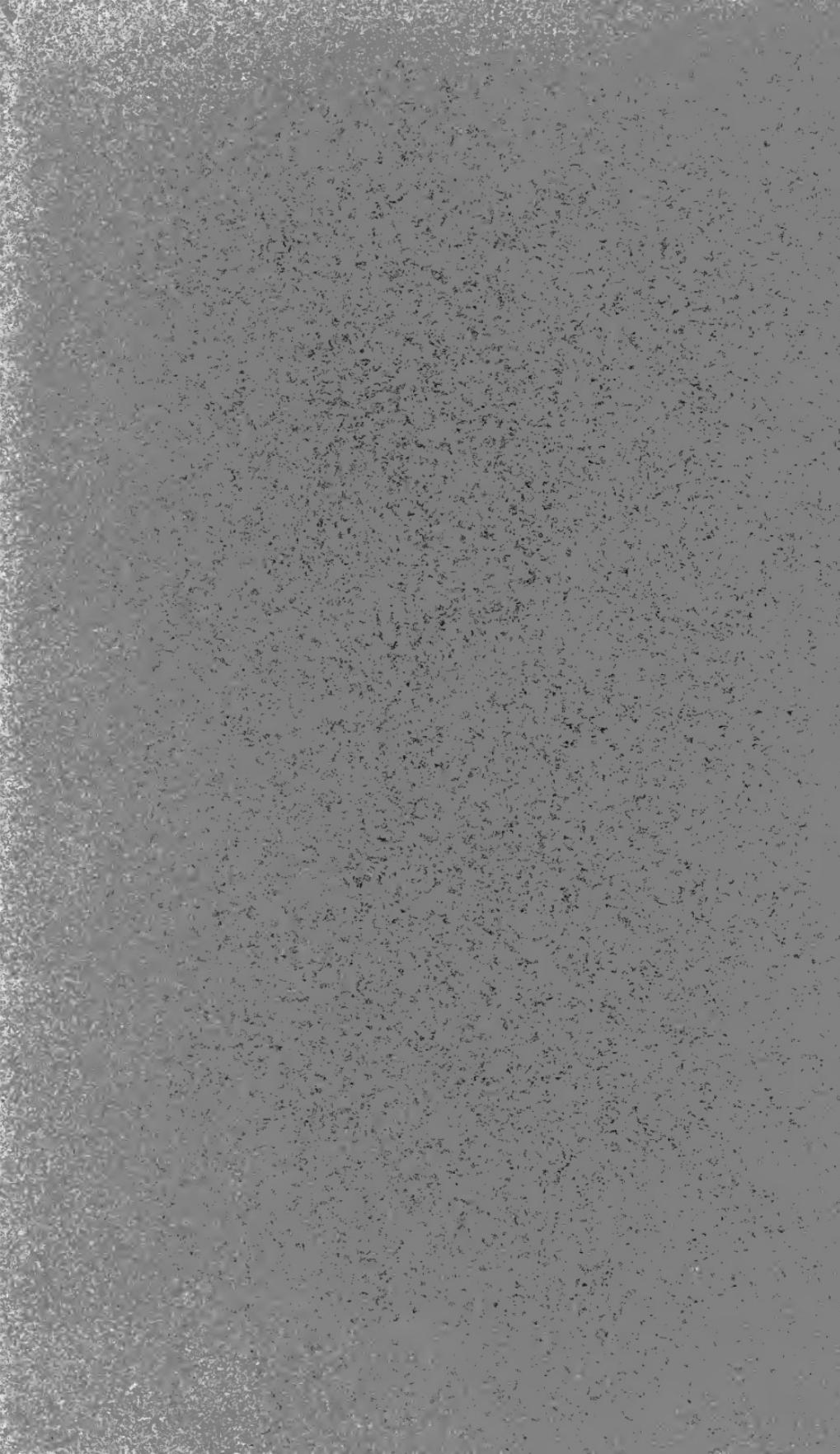
History and Law, 5 : History, Archæology and Art, Constitutional Law and History, Roman Law, Public Law.

[The number of alternative curricula open to the Aberdeen student has been estimated at 617. See *Alma Mater*, ix. 158.]

(5) For the Degree with Honours every candidate must attend classes in *five* subjects, taking, however, two classes, one being an Honours Class, in each of two subjects from his Honours Group. The five subjects shall include one from each of the first three of the above Departments, viz., Language and Literature, Mental Philosophy, Science. The Honours Groups are (a) Classics ; (b) Mental Philosophy ; (c) Mathematics and Natural Philosophy ; (d) Semitic Languages ; (e) Indian Languages ; (f) English ; (g) Modern Languages and Literature ; (h) History ; (i) Economic Science. It will be noticed that the old Natural Science Group has disappeared, but the ground is occupied by the Degrees of B.Sc. and D.Sc.

P. J. A.





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